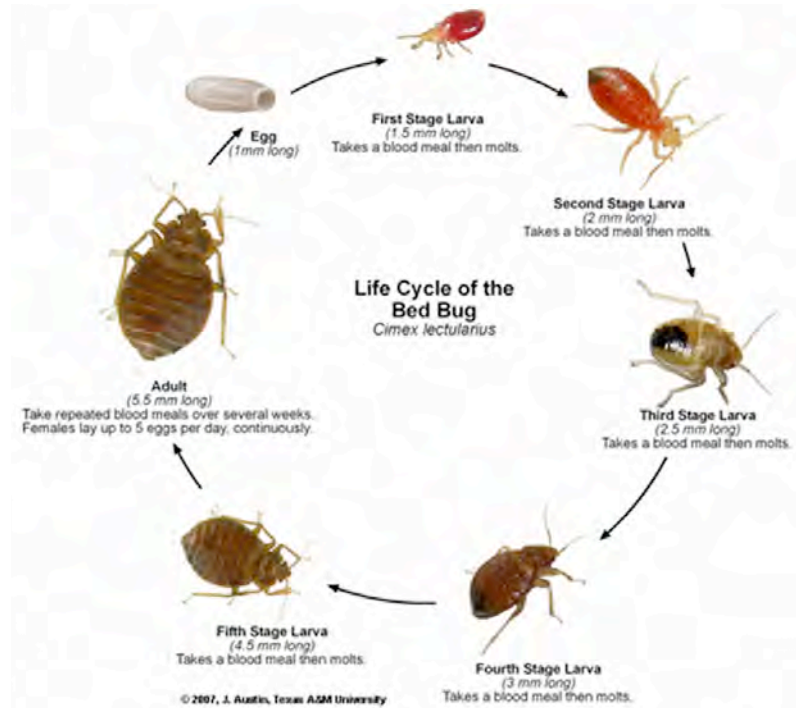


## Identification of Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are small but visible insects. There are three main life stages: the whitish egg (about 1 mm in length), five pale juvenile (nymph) stages that range from 1mm to 4.5 mm (1/4 inch), and the adult which can be as long as 7 or 8 mm (3/8 inch) when fed. The newly hatched nymph is very pale until it feeds. Then it looks like a tiny droplet of blood. Each nymph stage will feed and become filled with red blood. The adult is about the size and shape of an apple seed, and dark red to brown in color and as flat as a credit card before feeding.



The first sign of a bed bug infestation is usually the appearance of bites on the arms, neck, torso, or legs. Read on for more information about bed bug bites. One may also find live or dead bugs. Collect a sample for positive identification. Clusters of small stains or droplets of dried blood on furniture and bedding may also be found. These stains are the bed bugs' fecal droppings. They may be accompanied by shed skins, because bed bugs shed their outer skin, or molt, as they grow. Shed skins are amber in color and resemble the shape of a bed bug. There may also be live bugs and eggs where droppings are found.



Bed bugs, cast skins, fecal stains and eggs in the wood structure of a box spring. Photo by P. Stravino.

DON'T mistake bed bug droppings for cockroach droppings. Cockroaches leave behind tiny rectangular pellets, not round droplets or stains. There may also be rectangular egg cases or dead cockroaches nearby.

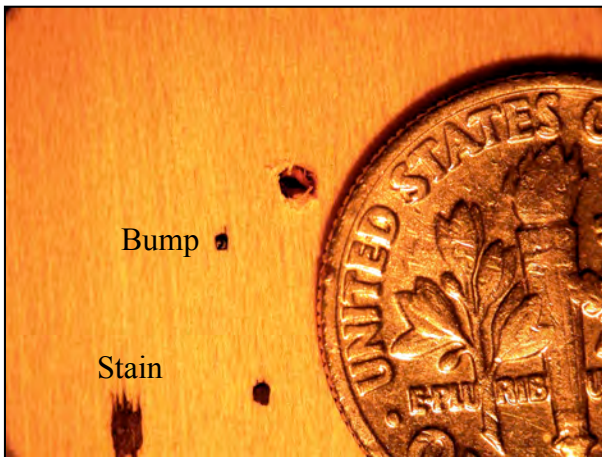
When searching for bed bugs it is important not to overlook the nymphs, which can be difficult to spot. Look for nymphs where droppings and stains appear, especially in crevices on fabric and wood surfaces.

Actual sizes of bed bug life stages:

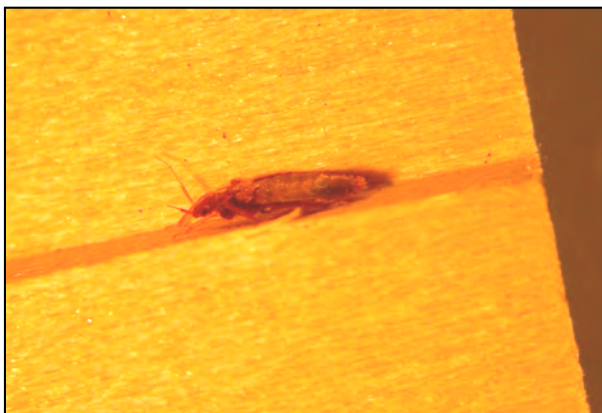
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Egg	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	adult



A newly hatched bed bug is smaller than a poppy seed (left) and the color of a sesame seed (right). Photo by J. Gangloff-Kaufmann.



The stains from bed bug fecal droppings can appear as rounded bumps or blackish, soaked-in stains. Photo by J. Gangloff-Kaufmann.



This adult bed bug is waiting to feed on blood. Adult bed bugs are very flat and fit into crevices as thin as a credit card before they feed. Nymphs are even thinner. Once fed, they are longer and plump until they begin to digest the blood meal. Photo by J. Gangloff-Kaufmann.